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ABSTRACT

Golden West College (GWC) has been producing video tapes for classroom use since 1970, and has gained through experience useful insights about faculty and television production crews. Faculty members are content experts, accustomed to controlling everything that goes on in the classroom, and oriented toward the printed or spoken word rather than toward visual images. Television production crews, on the other hand, are typically not teachers and have a different reward system that values creative productions and technical excellence. GWC's system for developing high quality videotapes makes use of the best efforts of both. The system involves the following steps: (1) the staff development officer discusses classroom needs with the faculty member and helps determine if a video lesson is appropriate; (2) a project proposal and budget are developed; (3) the faculty member, with the assistance of the staff development officer, specifies learning objectives and writes the content material; (4) a scriptwriter, working from this material and with the faculty member, writes the video tape script, which is then reviewed by another person in the discipline; (5) the script is used to guide the production, with the faculty member serving in an advisory capacity and, perhaps, appearing on camera; (6) the editing process insures that the faculty member's needs and expectations have been met; and (7) credit is given to the production crew, faculty member, and scriptwriter. (AYC)

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DEVELOPMENT OF VIDEO TAPES FOR CLASSROOM USE

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DEVELOPMENT OF VIDEO TAPES FOR CLASSROOM USE

A growing number of community college faculty members are using video taped materials to enhance their classroom activities. In some classes the video tape is carrying a major portion of instruction. This medium is becoming inexpensive enough to be considered in the same category as film either rented or purchased. The market is now filled with video materials in 1/2 or 3/4 inch format.

Like film selection, the faculty member is faced with previewing and then deciding whether a given video tape can be incorporated into a class section. The video tape has one great advantage over film in terms of classroom use--namely that the playback equipment allows the instructor to edit on the spot. The start/stop capability of the video equipment allows the use of segments of a tape with relative ease. This is one thing which makes many materials in video format useable to a classroom teacher where the same material on film is not worth the time. Copyright prevents use of many segments one might like to incorporate into a class.

Also like film, there is much on the video market that is not useful in the classroom because it was not designed for instructional use. It plays to a different audience. Many colleges have made the decision to produce their own video materials for the classroom. At Golden West College we have been producing video tapes for classroom use since 1970. We have learned a great deal since those early beginnings. Things like, most faculty members are not television cameramen, the talking

face at the lecturn makes for a dull video tape, or it takes time to edit a good tape. Beyond this, we have learned some things about faculty and television production crews that may be useful to others.

To begin with, faculty members are content experts and they are accustomed to controlling in detail everything that goes on in the classroom. They get mighty huffy about anyone telling them what to present to their class. This kind of ego involvement is both understandable and lauditory. After all, one must remember that when a faculty member puts something on tape he/she loses control of who sees it and where and when. Also, most faculty are word people but they don't think in primarily visual terms. They present things in the printed or spoken word.

Television production crews, depending upon their experiences, are typically not teachers. They consider themselves variously as creative artists, technicians, writers, actors, businessmen, etc. Their reward system is very different from that of faculty. They receive status and esteem from credit lines in the finished product. The media environment in which they were trained and function gives awards for creative productions and excellence in technical quality. Much of this matters very little to the classroom teacher who just wants that video tape to teach a specific thing in the classroom.

In order to create really good quality video tapes for use in the classroom, you need the best efforts of both worlds. The best video tape in the world is worthless if it has no useful accurate content that a faculty member has faith in. Poorly done video lessons will turn off student learners quicker than

anything. They are accustomed to turning off bad TV and they will do it in the classroom. To be successful for the faculty member, you must produce a high quality video lesson or it will not be used very much and your time and money is wasted.

At Golden West we have evolved a system for video tape production which seems to work well and result in a quality product. The staff development officer sits down with the faculty member (or members) and talks through what is needed for the classroom. If it appears that a video lesson is appropriate, a project proposal and budget are developed. Once the project is approved for funding, the staff development person must stay with it. (This is critical.) The faculty member is not ready at this point to go to production. In many cases the content is not really well organized nor are the teaching objectives clear. If you put the faculty member together with the television production people too soon in the process, two things are liable to happen. One, the faculty member is apt to be greatly influenced and turned aside from the mission he/she started on because of the highly technical unfamiliar environment of a television production facility. Two, the television production crew will spend time discussing with the faculty member what is to be produced when they could be better involved in production activities.

We begin the development process by requiring that the faculty member specify the learning objectives (critical for producer) and write the content material. Once this information is in smooth readable form, it can be given to a scriptwriter

unless the faculty member is experienced at writing scripts (few are). A good scriptwriter working with the faculty member can save a great deal of time and effort later in the project. Most scriptwriters are word people like faculty members so this makes a good transition. We have found it useful to have the final draft of a script reviewed by another person in the discipline. In some instances, we pick up small errors or differences that can be easily changed before production starts.

With the completed script, the faculty member is ready for the production crew. At this point the faculty member may be serving only in an advisory capacity to the production crew. Depending upon the tape, he/she may not even appear on the screen. Most of our recent productions show very little of the faculty member on camera. This, most faculty are quite relieved about as they are uncomfortable on camera. During the actual shooting, the script guides the work and the creative efforts of the television crew comes into play. They shoot a lot of tape to get scenes that both the director and the faculty member can use.

Perhaps one of the most critical and sometimes time consuming activities is the edit process. Once again, the faculty member must be there to be certain that the final draft is correct and what he/she wants. We have learned that time spent in preparing a good tight written script saves a great deal of time in the edit room. If your television production facility is impacted, as ours is, this means that production staff time means more time to do more projects.

Perhaps the credits on a video tape seem unimportant. We see them all the time on TV and we ignore them. Through

experience, we have learned that these few printed lines on the television screen are important to those involved. Do some thinking about this before someone gets credit they don't deserve. Generally we give credit lines to the Producer, Director (often the same person), Cameraman, Academic Consultant (faculty member), and the Scriptwriter.

With this system we feel that we are able to produce high quality video tapes that our TeleMedia Production people are proud to show. The tapes are accurate and useful in the classroom so faculty are satisfied. They even encourage others to use these materials. In some instances they encourage us to sell the tapes which we do. The system has evolved for us and will probably need further tuning. I should emphasize that there is an important role to be played in this process as you work with the faculty in the early stages. Without your involvement, the faculty member working directly with the production staff with no script is frought with difficulty, frustration and much wasted time. I encourage you as faculty development officers to get involved.

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